

Appleby Archaeology Group

Notes of the Annual General Meeting of the Appleby Archaeology Group which took place on Tuesday January 14th 2014 in the Market Hall, Appleby at 7pm.

Present

Committee members: 7

Members of the group: 35

Phyllis Rouston	Chairman	Martin Railton	Fieldwork/Research
Mike Godfrey	Treasurer	Stephen Walker	
Carol Dougherty	Membership Secretary	Richard Stevens	Secretary
Martin Joyce	Newsletter Editor		

Apologies for Absence

Margaret Albon
Tony Greenwood

Notes of the last AGM 8/01/2013

The notes had been circulated to all members with the winter Newsletter. The chairman explained that the following paragraphs should be renumbered as indicated:

5/2012 should read 5/2013
6/2012 should read 6/2013
7/2012 should read 7/2013

With this alteration, the notes were proposed for adoption by Linda Clarke, seconded by Ray Wager and approved by the meeting.

1/2014 Matters arising from the notes

- 6/2013 The subject of utilizing the Fellside Village Hall network for distribution of publicity had been discussed by the committee but it had been decided not to take any further action.
- 7/2013 Further to the request from Ron Lyons to look at the possibility of paying subscriptions by Standing Order, discussion between the Treasurer and Membership Secretary had ruled this out on logistical grounds. Ron had been so informed.

2/2014 Chairman's Report

The chairman thanked those present for attending the 15th AGM. She said that since the formation of the group, the membership had grown substantially and now stood at over 70, which she said was encouraging when other groups were losing members, with some even closing down.

She went on to say that the committee were delighted by the attendance at the talks, all of which were informative and enjoyable. Although the group are now meeting in the Public Hall rather than the supper room, we had not felt lost in the larger space. The reason for the change was that another community group wished to hire the supper room on Tuesday evenings for the whole year and the resulting income was important for the Town Council. The committee had considered changing the day but decided that too many members had commitments on other days, so it was decided to leave things as they were & move into the hall.

The possibility of organising 2-3 day visits to archaeological sites had been raised at the last AGM but the committee had decided not to proceed, the reason being that the group had struggled to get the numbers for trips further afield. These trips use hired transport and had to be financially viable for a small group such as ours. A small subsidy had been necessary to run the trip to Wallsend and this was not something we could afford to do indefinitely.

This year the committee were planning a trip to Hartlepool Maritime Museum and Headland and the committee will review the attendance on that trip. The group were also hoping to have a visit to Appleby Castle and Harry Hawkins had agreed to lead a guided walk to Shap Abbey in the summer.

The committee were also working hard to try to interest younger people in archaeology – Facebook had been one avenue and recently they had written to Appleby and Kirkby Stephen Grammar Schools offering talks to their students by Trish Shaw, a founder member of the group and a freelance archaeologist. The responses from both schools had been encouraging.

Finally the chairman thanked the committee for their hard work and support as she looked forward to our 16th year.

3/2014 Secretary's Report

The Secretary began by agreeing with the Chairman - all the talks had indeed been very well attended once again, although he said that the committee had been forced to cancel the March 2013 talk at short notice because of illness. Happily, Blaise Vyner is fully recovered and would now be coming to talk to us in March this year instead. He thought that the group had heard an amazing range of talks in the year. The highlight for him personally had been the extraordinary mesolithic discoveries underneath the Carlisle distributor road, but he also said that we had also been enlightened on the history of pottery, comparisons between prehistoric Wales and Cumbria, the Roman presence in the North Pennines, the relationship between ancient beliefs and landscape, and the history of Holme Cultram Abbey on the Solway Plain. Not forgetting our own member's evening in 2013 - Three fascinating talks by Carol, Elizabeth and Trish covering Scotland's prehistory, the trials of restoring a Brough cottage & classical Greece. He went on to say that still to come, besides Blaise, are Mark Graham and Dot Boughton – so there was still much to look forward to. He explained that maintaining the high standard achieved with the talks programme is one of the committee's major aims.

He thought that the summer activities had been successful, the walk through prehistoric Shap had been very well attended and appreciated by everyone there. The minibus trip to Wallsend had been less well attended but he was pleased to say that everyone who went along enjoyed the trip immensely, despite the foul weather.

The secretary reported that committee meetings had been held regularly, planning the year ahead, keeping a check on finances and making sure that the group stayed in touch with the wider archaeological community. Reports of all the talks had appeared in the newsletter of course as well as the Cumberland & Westmorland Herald and he said that he understood that they have received great prominence there. Ultimately the talks were archived on the website. Matters of interest to members had been circulated to their email addresses, most of the time successfully, although now and again the secretary admitted that he had made the odd mistake. For those members without email access, he promised to try to keep them informed promptly of urgent matters, such as cancellations, by phone.

The secretary said that Martin Joyce would continue to produce the newsletter in its present format, to the delight of everyone, since the printing arrangements had been changed - for this he said that the group must thank Wardell Armstrong Archaeology for their kind assistance. Martin had also done a fine job in keeping the website in order. Martin Railton continues to maintain the Facebook page and those members who can't or won't look at it were missing their own 15 minutes of internet fame – many members could be seen in the photo gallery digging away at Brackenber. The group page had 38 'likes' which is not exactly a huge number in Facebook land but Martin had been doing a great job in just keeping us out there.

The secretary closed by saying he hoped to see everyone at some or all of our forthcoming talks and trips in 2014.

4/2014 Treasurer's Report

The treasurer presented the financial report for the year. The accounts had been audited as usual by Peter Bridge and an audited report was available for inspection. The opening balance for the year was £303.54 and the closing balance £468.36, indicating that the Group had just about balanced income and expenditure. The costs of printing the newsletter had been reduced because of the change to Wardell Armstrong Archaeology, although the amount shown did not cover the whole year. Speaker's fees had increased, as may be expected with increased travel costs etc.

Acceptance of the report was proposed by Maureen Moore, seconded by Chris Wilson and approved by the meeting.

5/2014 Fieldwork and Research Report

Martin Railton presented the fieldwork and research report. He began by talking about the fieldwalking in the spring, when three fields had been walked although unfortunately only 3 flint artefacts were found. The area around the Hilton Beck had been most productive. Martin said that he would be searching for more fields this spring and would keep the membership informed. He asked for volunteers to contact him regarding the washing of finds.

He explained that, after a false start, the excavation of the mound at Brackenber had finally taken place in October as part of the Altogether Archaeology Project of the North Pennines AONB. Because of the late month, the weather had been poor but a lot had been achieved in just a week. More than half of a stone cairn had been excavated under the topsoil and it was believed that this overlay one or more prehistoric burials, although there had unfortunately been insufficient time to excavate further. Altogether Archaeology had said that they would fund another excavation in the spring of 2014 to investigate the lower levels of the mound. A total of 16 flints had been found through sieving of the spoil, including some dating to the Mesolithic period, as well as a tiny fragment of pottery, which could be either Neolithic or Iron Age in date. After the full excavation has been completed, the results will be published and the membership will be advised.

6/2014 Election of Officers and Committee members

The chairman advised the meeting that the three officers were presenting themselves for re-election and asked for approval by the meeting. No other nominations being received, the re-election of Phyllis Rouston, Mike Godfrey and Richard Stevens was proposed by Linda Clarke and seconded by Carol Dougherty.

She then said that Heather Edwards had been welcomed back onto the committee in March 2013 and that she was now seeking confirmation of that appointment. This was proposed by Carol Dougherty and seconded by Maggie Thompson.

All other members of the committee offered themselves for re-election. There were no other nominations from the floor and so the re-election of Carol Dougherty, Martin Joyce, Stephen Walker and Martin Railton was proposed by Ron Lyons and seconded by Steve Thompson.

All of these appointments were approved by the meeting.

7/2014 AOB

Although the latest newsletter had contained a plea for help with publicity, no response had yet been received. The chairman asked that anyone who felt they were able to help could contact any member of the committee.

Marjorie Campion noted that in a recent episode of Walking through History with Tony Robinson, almost all the experts he had met on his walk through Cumbria had spoken to the group at one time or another.

Ray Wager asked Martin Railton if there were any results from the survey carried out last year at the Roman Fort at Kirkby Thore. Martin replied that the work had been successful, discovering the first firm evidence of a vicus and a road leading out towards the Maiden Way. Paul Frodsham at the AONB has all the survey data and will eventually publish the report – Martin said he will advise the group when this is done.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 7.25pm.

Richard Stevens 23rd January 2013